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ABSTRACT

In response to the need for guidance, this manual provides assistance for faith-based communities as they decide whether licensed child care fits within their ministry. The manual covers steps for getting started, key factors in determining budget, performing a needs assessment in the community and for the facility, the administrative structure of the facility, and program considerations. The manual concludes with information about child care resource and referral, and contact information on relevant professional organizations. (HTH)

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Start-Up Manual For Faith-Based Child Care Programs

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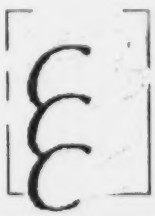
Background

Since the end of World War II the demand for child care has been on a continual upswing. Today almost two of every three mothers with children under the age of six are in the labor force and over 75% of children will spend time in child care settings by the time they reach age 12. (US Department of Labor, 2001). To ensure children receive adequate child care services, states have developed licensing standards. These standards are intended to ensure a safe, sanitary environment in which the child can develop and prepare for success in school and life. Quality child care programs have a positive impact on children's performance as they enter into school. One way for a parent to acknowledge a high quality program is through accreditation. According to the National Center for Early Development & Learning, the highest level of program quality assurance available to parents is through accreditation systems. ("Early Childhood Research & Policy Briefs", Winter 2002, Vol. 2, #1). Child Care is an option that must work not only for the parent purchasing the care but also for the child receiving the care. In response to this growing need, faith-based communities have requested assistance in establishing a procedural manual. The following pages will guide you as you decide whether licensed child care fits within your ministry.



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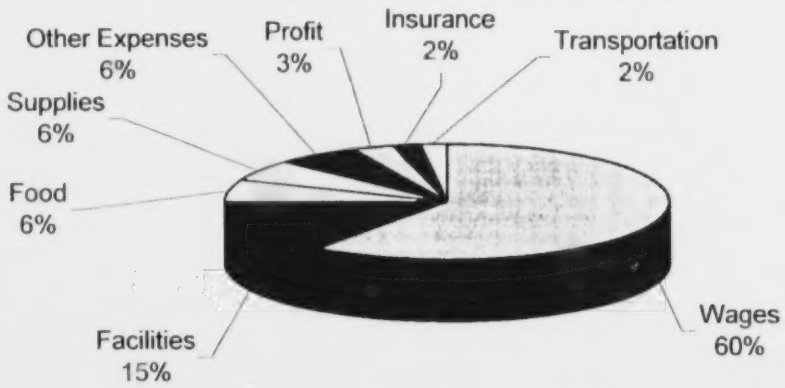
Getting Started

Below are some steps you can take to begin the process of opening a faith-based child care program:

1. Your first step will be to check with local zoning to insure that your facility can be zoned for child care.
2. Next, form a committee or task force of individuals interested in exploring the faith-based community's interest in opening a child care facility.
3. Then, decide your motivation in wanting to open a child care facility.
4. Are you interested in performing a ministry for the community?
   Will you provide religious education in a faith-based school setting or will you become a witness to the community, simply by providing a program for young children that meets the needs of the community?
5. Does the faith-based program need to make money? If the answer is yes don't be embarrassed; it is important that this is clear from the very beginning. Depending on the age of the children you serve, the location of the church and the program components, you might be able to make a small profit after 2 to 3 years. The congregation needs to understand the financial obligation associated with operating a child care program.
6. Develop a budget, taking into consideration the following:

Where Do Your Child Care Dollars Go?



Key Factors

In designing your budget, the majority of faith-based programs try to provide high quality child care at a reduced cost to the public. Quality child care costs a substantial amount of money, especially in staff costs. The Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study stresses the importance of low staff to child ratios, the hiring of staff with experience and education in early childhood development, and the importance of staff retention. In order to find and keep staff with the experience and qualifications necessary to operate a high quality program, you must pay a livable and competitive wage. When you are designing your budget, take into

account the percentages listed above and set your rates at a level that will assist you in implementing a program. Remember that the program must benefit the program's employees, the children and their families to be successful. If the host faith-based community chooses to subsidize child care as a part of its ministry, it can help you determine their current and future financial obligation.

Perform a Needs Assessment in the Community

Call you local Resource and Referral Agency and ask questions regarding child care capacity needs in your area. Ask your resource and referral agency how many family child care providers are located within a 5 mile radius if an urban setting and the larger catchment area if in a rural setting of your faith-based community. Also check on their history of enrollments and how many openings they currently have. Are there start-up and/or operating funds available? What other communities of faith offer services in this geographic area? What educational institutions exist in this area that offer trainings in early childhood education? How is child care licensed in this state/town and who is the controlling entity?

Contact the child care centers within the catchment radius of your faith-based community to answer the following questions:

1.) Do you have a waiting list in any of your programs?
2.) How many openings do you currently have and for what ages?
3.) Do you accept children who receive public financial aid?
4.) If yes, do you limit the number of financially assisted children in your program?
What is the public payment rate for these children compared to the open market rate?
6.)What schools does your facility serve?
7.) What other schools do you get requests for?
8.) Do you provide transportation? If so, why?
9.) In your opinion, what are the child care needs in our community?
10.) Are there publicly funded services in our area that we could/should partner with such as Head Start, state preschool programs, other faith-based child care services?

Before going on to the next step, ask:
Is there a need for child care in our community?
What age group has the greatest need?
Should we serve low-income families?
Should we limit the number of low-income families served?
How do we define low income?
Will we serve children outside our faith?
Should we provide transportation to public schools or other programs and to and from homes?

Needs Assessment

Call Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 to find your local Resource & Referral Agency

Name _____

Distance from Faith-based Community_____

Waiting List Yes___ No___

How many current openings_____

What ages_____, _____, _____

Do you limit the number of child care assistance children?
Yes___ No___

What schools do you serve?

What schools do you get requests for that you cannot serve?

From your perspective what are the child care needs in this community?

Are there publicly funded services in our area that we could/should partner with such as Head Start, state Preschool programs, other faith-based child care services?

Needs Assessment Compilation

1.) Is there a need for child care in our community?

2.) What age group has the greatest need?

3.) Should we serve low-income families?

4.) Should we limit the number of low income families served?

5.) Should we provide transportation to public schools?

Call the local Resource and Referral Agency and ask:

What is the greatest child care need in our faith-based community area?

How many family child care providers are near us?_____

Is there a school that is under served?

Perform a Needs Assessment of your Facility

Obtain a copy of the child care center rules and regulations from your State Department of Human Services. Below are some general licensing requirements:

- **Square Footage and Group Size**
  - Infants
  - Toddlers
  - Preschoolers and School-agers

- **Staff Qualifications**

- **Personal Hygiene**

- **Playground**

- **Exits**

- **Grade Level**

Facility Needs Assessment

Based on your state's child care rules and regulations:

Are the classrooms that we will use on grade level?
Yes____ No____

What ages will be served?	What is the required square footage?
Infants _____	_____sq. ft per child
Toddlers _____	_____sq. ft per child
Preschool _____	_____sq. ft per child
School age _____	_____sq. ft per child

How many **toilets** do we **have** _____
How many **toilets** do we **need**_____

How many **sinks** do we **have**_____
How many **sinks** do we **need**_____

Playground

Does our current playground meet licensing requirements?
Yes____ No_____

What improvements need to be made?

Exits
Do we have sufficient exits from each classroom that meet licensing requirements?

What improvements need to be made?

How much will it cost?

What ages will be served?

Is our facility accessible to parents and children with disabilities according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

Administrative Structure of Facility

Some decisions will need to be made regarding the structure under which the child care facility will operate.

How will it be financed?

Over what period of time?

With the understanding that a profit will not be made for at least 2 years, how much should be borrowed to help operate the facility?

How much in start-up costs do you need? Include any necessary remodeling.

Will you contract out or run it in-house?

What will the chain of command be?

Who will monitor shared space issues?

Who does reviews of staff/director?

How will the financials be audited?

Should you hire a consultant? (Many times this is a cost savings move)
Will we use a shared cost system – sharing a % of janitorial, maintenance, copier, etc.?

Who will be the liaison between the faith-based community and child care facility?

How will communication take place?

Will you employ members of the faith-based community?

Structure of Child Care Facility

How will we finance this project?

Over what period of time will we finance?

How much should be borrowed?

Does this include remodeling and startup costs?

Yes_____ No_____

Will we contract out or run the program in house?

Contract Out _____ In House_____

Who will be the liaison between child care and the faith-based community?

Who will monitor financials?

Will we form a separate corporation, or have the facility fall under the faith-based community umbrella?

Separate Corporation_____ Under Faith-Based Community_____

Program Considerations

A faith-based community's commitment to a relationship with a child care program grows out of its theology and its understanding of ministry. The Mission Statement of the early childhood program must reflect compatibility between the faith-based communities sense of ministry and the purpose of the program. Some questions to ask:

Why has the faith-based community chosen an early childhood ministry?

Pastoral – to provide a community of support to parents and to assist them as they help their children develop as healthy, thoughtful, responsible, spiritual individuals.
Community Service – to serve the community surrounding the religious institution and/or families whose workplace is nearby.
Social Justice – to serve families with limited incomes or special needs.
Stewardship – to use facilities that may go unused during the week.
Evangelical – to reach families with young children for purposes of conversion and membership
Religious Education – to emphasize the spiritual development of children.

What will be the focus of our program?
Prioritize 1-7

Pastoral_____ Community Service_____

Social Justice_____ Stewardship_____

Evangelical_____ Religious Education_____

Generate dollars to fund other programs_____

Once you have decided the focus of your program, ask these questions:

What results are expected of the child care program? It describes goals for the program in ways that reflect mutually held beliefs and standards of care and education.

Who will be served? It describes its target population by age, background, needs, etc.

How will the early childhood programs be managed? It clarifies both the operations of the program and its legal status.

Used with permission from the *Congregations and Child Care Self Study Guide*, Ecumenical Child Care Network.

QUICK CHECKLIST FOR OPENING A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Major preparatory tasks are common to most child care program. The board may use the completion of certain tasks as a time to make a report to the faith-based community.

1. Determine need for child care in the community and decide what kind of program to operate.
2. Consult licensing and other appropriate regulatory agencies to find out about standards for building and outdoor space and about fire, health, and safety codes.
3. Obtain zoning permit, if necessary.
4. Develop agreement between faith-based community and program (draw up a contract).
5. Prepare layouts of rooms and yard with basic equipment.
6. Plan necessary renovations to indoor and outdoor space to meet codes and requirements.
7. Determine costs for space and equipment needs.
8. Develop and collect data for start-up and operating budgets.
9. Develop goals and objectives of program; set hours and calendar.
10. Develop policies on admission, tuition and fees.
11. Finalize start-up and operating budgets.
12. Apply for necessary permits and license.
13. Obtain non-tuition funding (foundations, grants, government subsidies, contributions, bank loans, fundraising).
14. Prepare building for occupancy.
15. Order necessary equipment and supplies.
16. Hire program director.
17. Open accounts for utilities and telephone.
18. Obtain necessary insurance coverage.
19. Set up books for financial record keeping; establish procedures for handling money.

20. Prepare policies for personnel, program, curriculum development, health, safety, nutrition, and parent involvement.

21. Develop food program and schedules; order first month's supply of food.

22. Prepare operations manual; parent handbook.

23. Develop registration and enrollment procedures and forms (master card, health form, parent agreement, attendance record).

24. Set opening date; advertise, recruit, and pre-enroll children.

25. Design a staff handbook; hire and orient staff.

26. Design curriculum, daily schedules for staff and children.

27. Obtain permits and license to operate.

28. Arrange classrooms and develop yard space.

29. Prepare and post emergency and fire procedures.

30. Develop and post program discipline policy.

31. Outline weekly planning procedures (and forms if necessary).

32. Develop evaluation forms (children, staff, program).

33. Plan pre-opening open house. Invite members, parents, children, and benefactors.

Meet with faith-based community Board regularly throughout program preparation!

Excerpts from "Helping Churches Mind the Children" Edited by Margery Freeman. National Council of Churches in Christ, 1987.

About Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R):

CCR&Rs help parents find child care...
Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions families make, but all too often they must rely on word-of-mouth. Local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations help parents take the guesswork out of choosing care - giving them referrals to local child care providers, information on state licensing requirements, availability of child care subsidies, and other pertinent information. CCR&Rs provide guidance by phone, in person, and in other ways, such as the Internet, that are tailored to each individual family.

CCR&Rs support families to raise healthy children...
By talking with parents one-on-one, CCR&R counselors gain a unique understanding of the delicate balance of family life, particularly for low-income families. They understand that finding high-quality child care is just a first step to raising happy, healthy children. Through workshops, hot lines, and newsletters, CCR&Rs reach out to parents with trusted, local information that enables them to make informed choices.

CCR&Rs build the supply of child care...
In most communities, demand for child care far outstrips supply. CCR&Rs provide an entry point to the child care field, helping providers meet licensing requirements. CCR&Rs also support providers by offering low-cost or free training in diverse topics like health & safety, child development, and sound business practices. CCR&Rs work with local and state governments and the private sector to leverage resources for building and maintaining the supply of quality child care.

CCR&Rs improve the quality of child care...
No one has a greater impact on the quality of care than the people who work with children every day. That is why CCR&Rs across the country provide ongoing professional development opportunities to child care providers and staff. By supporting accreditation programs, helping create financial incentives for education, and advocating for better compensation for providers, CCR&Rs improve the quality of care for all children.

CCR&Rs bridge child care and education...
High-quality child care has many benefits, including preparing children for school. CCR&Rs strive to create child care settings that help children grow and learn. Educating parents about early learning and the components of quality care is also a major part of CCR&R services. CCR&Rs are dedicated to informing communities about the important links between early learning and later success in school.

CCR&Rs document child care needs and trends...
What makes CCR&Rs unique is their ability to gather information to better understand family needs. CCR&Rs are the major source of information about the local supply and cost of child care. CCR&Rs are able to track trends about the changing needs of families.

CCR&Rs engage new partners...
High-quality child care does more than benefit children; it can create positive results for entire families and for communities as a whole. By reaching out to business leaders, law enforcement, school teachers, and others, CCR&Rs help make child care an issue the entire community cares about. CCR&Rs collaborate with other family support services to promote a holistic vision of child care that includes health, literacy, and special needs.

CCR&Rs tell the child care story...
By providing resources, documenting community needs, and creating new ways to meet those needs, CCR&Rs bring the voices of children, families, and child care providers to the public.

Professional Organizations

Child Care Aware
1-800-424-2246
www.childcareaware.org

National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA)
202-393-5501
www.naccrra.org

Ecumenical Child Care Network
773-693-4040
www.eccn.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
1-800-224-2460
www.naeyc.org

NACCRRA Resource Exchange (NREx)
303-290-9088 ext. 205
www.nrex.org

National Resource Center (NRC)
1-800-598-KIDS
http://nrc.uchsc.edu/

National Center for Early Development & Learning
http://www.ncedl.org

Child Care Bureau
1-877-249-9117
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ccb/

General ADA Information
1-800-514-0301 (voice) 1-800-514-0383 (TDD)
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Child Care Information
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/childq%26a.htm

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